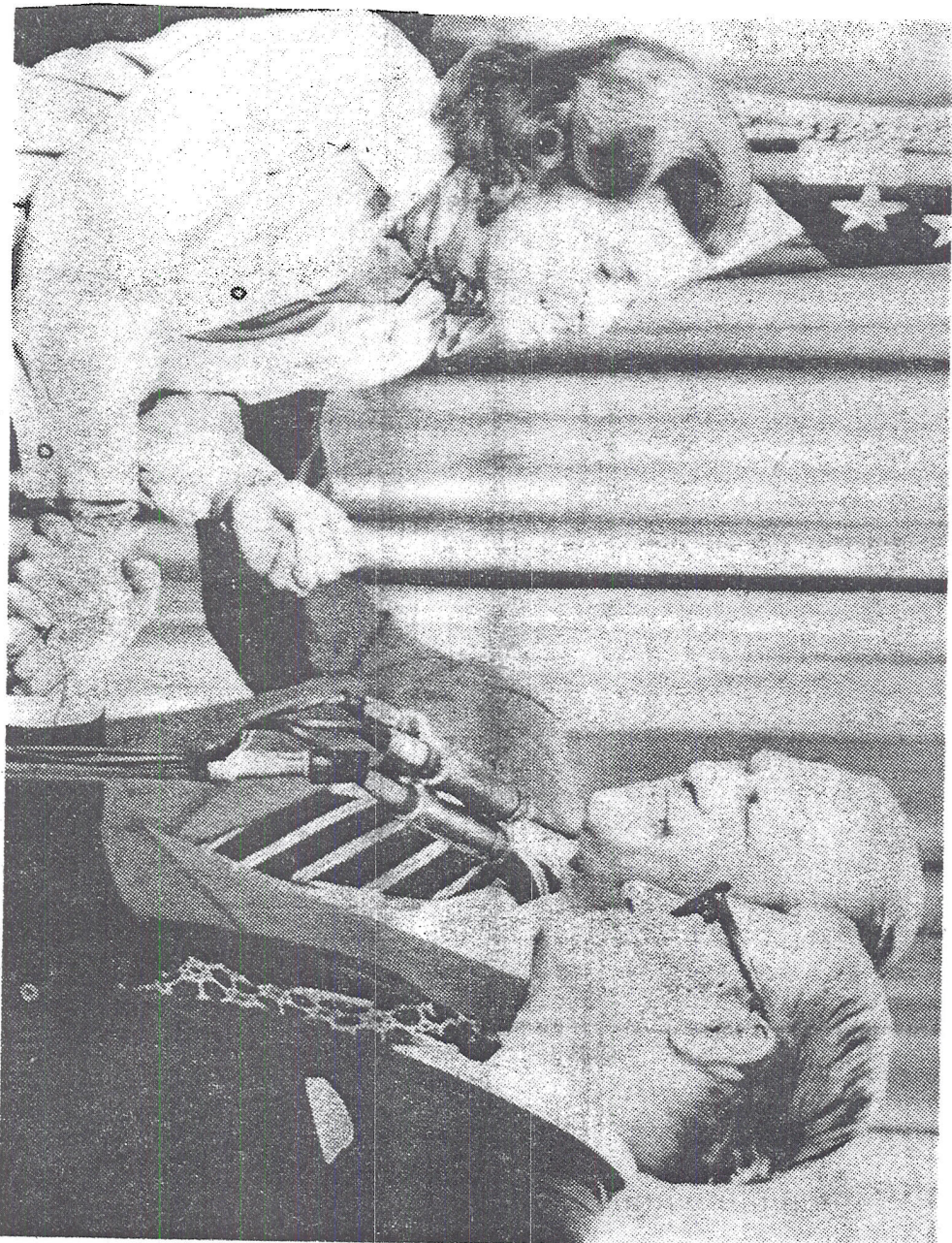


Ford Chooses Rockefeller

To Be His Vice President



BETTY FORD, THE PRESIDENT AND NELSON ROCKEFELLER
The vice presidential nominee was greeted as he entered the Oval Office

UPI Telephoto

'A Good Partner For Me'

Washington

Calling it a tough choice for a tough job, President Ford yesterday nominated former New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, 66, to be the 41st vice president of the United States.

Rockefeller was picked from a group of five or six leading Republicans, apparently chosen because the new President considered him best equipped to step into the role of Chief Executive in an emergency.

In making his choice, Mr. Ford steered his developing administration toward a moderate course and opted for reconciliation rather than the grooming of an heir-apparent.

The President announced his choice at a televised gathering of ranking administration officials and congressional leaders in his

Oval Office. He called Rockefeller "a good partner for me and, I think, a good partner for our country and the world."

Four hours later, the official nomination went to Capitol Hill where the only impediment to confirmation appeared to be Rockefeller's vast family and personal wealth, which has influenced business, government and academic affairs for decades.

Rockefeller later told reporters that he and Mr. Ford discussed the 1976 presidential campaign when Mr. Ford offered him the vice presidency.

The former New York governor said Mr. Ford discussed his own plans to run but did not talk about whether Rockefeller would be his running mate in that campaign.

Asked if Mr. Ford actually told him that he would seek a full term, Rockefeller replied: "He has every intention of it—that was my impression, and that's what I urged."

"What he wants to do in

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1

regards to a running mate is up to him," Rockefeller said, adding that Mr. Ford "talked about himself not about me."

Rockefeller, who was vacationing at Seal Harbor, Me., was asked Monday night to come to the White House yesterday by Alexander M. Haig Jr., the President's chief of staff.

He arrived only about 20 minutes before he was introduced yesterday, and apparently was not told he was the choice until he met face to face with the President in a sitting room off the Oval Office.

Appearing slightly nervous, Rockefeller told the President:

"You . . . through your dedication and openness, have already reawakened faith and hope, and under your leadership we the people and we as a nation have the will and determination and the capabilities to overcome the hard realities of our time."

"I'm optimistic about the long-term future."

White House officials said it is still undetermined what role the President expects Rockefeller to play in the administration.

Rockefeller associates said, however, that he would like to involve himself in foreign affairs.

"This is considered a likely possibility because Rockefeller briefly served President Dwight D. Eisenhower as a national security adviser and is a longtime friend of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. President Ford, on the other hand, is far more experienced in domestic matters than in foreign relations.

At a brief news conference following the announcement, Rockefeller made it clear he understands the vice president is whatever the President wants him to be.

Asked what part he expects to play, he said, "The role of a vice president totally depends on the President. If the President wants to use him, wonderful. If he doesn't, fine."

Rockefeller, who has made three bids for the Presidency, turned down vice presidential overtures

More Rockefeller news on Page 9

twice—from Richard M. Nixon in 1960 and from a Democrat, Hubert H. Humphrey, in 1968.

He said he had accepted the job this time because of the serious problems confronting the country and because their solution "is going to involve and require all the people of this country, their dedication to the common interests."

Rockefeller resigned the governorship of New York last December after serving for 15 years. Since then there had been a widespread presumption he would make another bid for the Republican presidential nomination in 1976.

He brushed aside questions about his own political ambitions yesterday.

Preparations for congressional confirmation hearings began almost immediately after the announcement. The Senate Rules and Administration Committee asked the FBI for a full investigation and ordered the Library of Congress to submit a complete Rockefeller file.

Senator Howard W. Cannon (Dem-Nev.), the committee chairman, said Rockefeller will be asked to supply his personal income tax returns as Mr. Ford did when his confirmation was before Congress last fall.

Presidential Counselor Robert T. Hartmann said Mr. Ford began his selection process by listing all the names submitted by each of the various groups he had asked for recommendations.

It was a way, Hartmann said, of determining which candidates had the broadest support and how they would be received by Congress.

Rockefeller was said to have ranked high in the nominations from each of the groups, though there were minor efforts by conservatives to head him off early in Mr. Ford's consideration process.

Friday, the President asked FBI Director Clarence M. Kelly for a check on three persons to see whether there was negative informa-

tion in the bureau's files, Hartmann said.

At the time, about half a dozen persons were still in contention, but the FBI was asked to check only the three who did not hold elective office.

Monday, presidential counselor Philip A. Buchen discussed five or six persons with Watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski to see whether the prosecutor's office had uncovered derogatory information.

Of those under consideration throughout, the President is known to have discussed the Vice Presidency only with Rockefeller, Hartmann said.

Mr. Ford called Rockefeller Saturday amid reports that the White House had been given a tip that Rockefeller might have financed efforts to disrupt the Democratic National Convention in 1972.

Investigators searched out a safe deposit box in Pulas-ki, Va., which an informant said might contain copies of papers once in the possession of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt, which might contain derogatory information about Rockefeller.

Investigators found no papers, Jaworski declared the matter closed, and a White House official labeled the incident a right-wing attempt to smear Rockefeller.

In the midst of the episode, Mr. Ford called Rockefeller to discuss it, but also asked him questions about the vice presidency.

Hartmann said he now assumes the President got an indication from Rockefeller during that conversation that the former governor would accept the nomination if it was offered.

Mr. Ford first revealed his decision less than two hours before Rockefeller arrived at the White House.

He held an early morning meeting with congressional leaders and discussed the economy for about an hour before telling them toward the close of the meeting that he would nominate Rockefeller.

The leaders remained in the White House until after the announcement.

Los Angeles Times